



MONTANA

OFFICE OF TOURISM

FY13 MARKETING PLAN

The Montana Promotion Division strives to strengthen Montana's economy through increased visitor travel, visitor expenditures, and film production, in the state. The Division is responsible for implementing and promoting a positive brand image for Montana as a vacation destination and works to ensure brand consistency amongst its marketing and promotional efforts. The Division focuses on attracting high value, low impact geo traveler visitors who contribute to Montana's economic and social prosperity while respecting and appreciating Montana's authentic natural and cultural assets. This program goal is accomplished through various marketing efforts, networking with the state's public and private sector tourism and recreation industry and agencies, along with education and development assistance. The division works to project a positive image of the state through consumer advertising, electronic marketing, public relations efforts, international and domestic group travel marketing, printing and distribution of literature, staffing support and training of professional travel counselors, assisting in the development of tourism infrastructure, and marketing to motion picture and television production companies. The division provides training and assistance to the Montana tourism industry; administer and distributes event marketing and infrastructure grants and oversees expenditures of six regional non-profit corporations and the twelve qualified convention and visitors bureaus. The Division also works to develop and administer brand outreach to encourage cooperation and support of the Montana Promotion Division brand strategy within the state's tourism suppliers and partners by educating people on the brand platforms of:

- More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48
- Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to natural wonders
- Breathtaking experiences by day, relaxing hospitality at night.

The Montana Promotion Division is primarily funded by 4% of the statutorily appropriated 7% lodging facility use tax. The Montana Promotion Division responsibilities are mandated primarily in Title 15, Chapter 65, and Title 2, Chapter 15, MCA.

Mission:

To strengthen Montana's economy through the promotion of the state as a vacation destination and film location; by maximizing the combined talents and abilities of its staff: and with guidance from the Governor's Tourism Advisory Council: the Montana Promotion Division strives to promote a quality experience to visitors while encouraging preservation of Montana's environment and quality of life.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES—

In order to be both strategic and accountable in their marketing initiatives, the Montana Promotion Division has outlined the following division goals:

- Increase awareness of the brand among the target audience
- Move Montana into the target audience's consideration set
- Support Montana Tourism entities in increasing their revenues
- Market Montana as a competitive, creative, and viable filming location

The following objectives have been defined for Fiscal Year 2013:

- 1) Commit to the 'Geotraveler' by bringing the concepts to life with our industry partners, regions and other stakeholders
- 2) Set vision, goals and objectives from within
- 3) Build a more rewarding working environment by being dedicated to getting more out of ourselves and our team
- 4) Redefine the opportunities to attract international visitors
- 5) Test a 'borderless' approach to promoting Montana by breaking down geographic and political boundaries one step at a time
- 6) Build an actionable Roadmap for the redevelopment of visitmt.com to ultimately be the most informative and visitor friendly destination website in the world
- 7) Measure and improve customer service all across MTOT activities
- 8) Measure success and monitor progress to guide in the setting and meeting of expectations.

In working to align the program's key goals with the statewide Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan, the Montana Promotion Division has specified the following four strategic priorities to currently focus on program-wide. The first three priorities support the division goals and objectives, and the fourth priority ensures that the goals and objectives can be measured and tracked. These priorities include:

- Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive, four-season and integrated consumer-facing marketing campaign that attracts the target audience to Montana;
- Create an integrated strategy for interactive media that incorporates social networking opportunities and resonates with the target audience;
- Help identify the unique, and perhaps lesser-known, attributes of the Montana brand and promote those attributes including but not limited to: tribal communities, off-the-beaten path areas (e.g., Montana's High Plains), arts and culture and other Geotraveler-centric experiences; also highlight shoulder-season opportunities; and
- Develop and implement necessary measurement tools and tracking system.

The Division is now comprised of four Bureaus – Marketing, Sales and Constituent Services, Industry Services and Operations, and the Film Office.

I. MARKETING BUREAU—

This Bureau consists of the Consumer Marketing, Digital Marketing and the Public Relations programs, and has identified the following strategies:

- 1) Develop and implement integrated marketing campaigns to build awareness of Montana as a travel destination (OBJ 1)
- 2) Develop plan to increase awareness of and visitation to lesser-traveled areas and off-peak seasons by leveraging visitor interest in Glacier and Yellowstone national parks (OBJ 5)
- 3) Build an actionable roadmap for the redevelopment of visitmt.com to ultimately be the most informative and visitor-friendly destination website in the world (OBJ 6)
- 4) Create systems to facilitate collaboration, consistency, and ownership of marketing efforts across programs and guide agency and marketing contractor efforts (OBJ 2, 3, 7, 8)
- 5) Streamline measurement and forecasting systems, templates, and reporting (OBJ 7, 8)

MARKETING BUREAU PROGRAMS—

Consumer Marketing—

The Consumer Marketing program is responsible for promoting the state as a vacation destination to domestic travelers, ensuring that the significant economic benefit from out-of-state visitors continues to grow. The program develops advertising and promotional campaigns to positively and uniquely brand Montana, differentiate the state as a travel destination, and increase tourism from domestic and Canadian travelers. Campaigns are designed to create awareness for Montana, generate an interest in visiting, and influence travel intention. Nationwide tourism trends, statistics from the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana, syndicated research, and the results of contracted research studies help determine the overall marketing strategy and target audience as well as measure the success of its marketing efforts. Specific goals of this program are to: Create demand for Montana as premiere global travel destination; increase internal and external collaboration to better capitalize on Montana's marketing efforts and convert travel interest into action; and create and implement a strategy to capture more repeat visitation and push repeat visitors to lesser-traveled parts and lesser-traveled seasons of the state.

Electronic Marketing—

The Electronic Marketing program uses current and emerging digital technologies to create immersive and compelling online content, such as the visitmt.com and getlostmt.com web sites as well as 'apps' for smart phones and tablets.

This content is designed to complement the tourism marketing efforts in traditional media (print, TV, radio and location based) by creating demand for the Montana tourism product with web video and other experiential content. Electronic Marketing's projects also provide Montana consumers with comprehensive and recommendable content; allowing the consumer to become inspired or plan travel, in advance of, or during their Montana vacation.

This content has proven to be a cost-effective way to disseminate timely and valuable information to visitors and our Montana marketing partners. Electronic Marketing makes the database of tourism content available to tourism partners, who utilize it on their own website via web feeds.

As communication technologies continue to grow and evolve, Electronic Marketing will continue to play a key role in keeping the Montana Promotion Division's marketing efforts at the leading edge, continually connecting with our consumers and increasing consumer's intent to travel to Montana.

Public Relations (PR) & Media Relations—

The PR & Media Relations program works with local, regional, national and international travel journalists (print, web, broadcast and social/interactive) to communicate Montana's diverse tourism stories. The program proactively solicits Montana coverage and also serves as a clearinghouse and customer service conduit for inbound media inquiries. PR opportunities are vetted and serviced with both logistical and (when qualified) financial assistance, which generates millions of dollars worth of articles and programming highlighting our state as a travel destination. In addition, the PR & Media Relations program maintains and continually augments an extensive photo library of Montana images for a variety of publicity and marketing purposes. The program also provides outreach and support to our tourism regions and CVB's to further their publicity efforts.

In addition, this program is responsible for developing information materials to communicate the Montana Promotion Division's and the Montana tourism industry's initiatives and activities in order to educate and encourage community cooperation, support and understanding of the industry.

Publications—

The Montana Office of Tourism publications provide flavorful and factual coverage of Montana's year-round recreation and attractions to visitors of all ages. These free guides contain gorgeous photos and easy-to-read information helping our visitor further their sense of discovery for planning their vacation in Montana. They give the local story with depth and perspective portraying Montana at its best.

The guides have been designed to be used in conjunction with the Montana Office of Tourism's website, www.visitmt.com. Consumers can use the printed guides, supplemented by www.visitmt.com and www.wintermt.com to create fun-filled itineraries on where to go, how to get there, where to stay and what to do for a very personal experience.

To further encourage our visitors and residents to explore Montana, a free, newly developed app entitled "Get Lost, The Magazine" is available on an iPad device, telling stories through images, video and articles.



II. SALES AND CONSTITUENT SERVICES BUREAU—

This Bureau includes the Brand Education and Outreach, Tourism Development, Group Tour & International Marketing, and Visitor Information Systems programs, and has identified the following strategies:

- 1) Coordinate the statewide 2013-2017 MT Tourism & Recreation Strategic Planning process for implementation in the Spring of 2013, and employ a reporting/monitoring system for the plan (OBJ 2)
- 2) Continue support, outreach and development for the existing Geotourism Projects (OBJ 1)
- 3) Recognize collaborative opportunities with other MTOT programs, constituents, and other states; be proactive in engaging them in projects that provide a seamless and “borderless” vacation experience for our visitors. (OBJ 2,4)
- 4) Cultivate a cooperative and systematic approach to information dissemination by developing Visitor Information Centers that provide consistent up-to-date traveler information and first-hand knowledge of Montana vacation destinations (OBJ 2,5,7)
- 5) Monitor Brand USA programs and seize opportunities to partner in promotions to increase awareness of Montana as a vacation destination to overseas visitors (OBJ 4, 5)
- 6) Partnering with staff, tourism regions, Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Tourism Business Improvement Districts, continue to educate the tourism community about the Montana brand and the division’s efforts in attracting visitors to the state, and the role our tourism businesses play in these efforts (OBJ 1,2,5)

SALES AND CONSTITUENT SERVICES BUREAU PROGRAMS—

Visitor Information Systems—

The Visitor Information System (VIS) program is a component of an integrated and comprehensive tourism marketing strategy. This program supports Montana’s state-sponsored Visitor Information Centers located in gateway communities throughout the state and also provides financial and technical assistance through a specialized grant program for creating special events as part of a community or region’s economic development efforts, and has recently established the Tourism E-Marketing Technology Grant program to help diversify and enhance the digital mastery of the Montana tourism industry partners.

The program’s key goal is to work with Montana’s state, federal, local and tribal partners to create a system of visitor information dissemination and promote the system through travel web sites, visitor guides and partners.

Overseas Marketing—

The Overseas Marketing program promotes Montana as a destination to the international travel trade, with a particular emphasis on Germany, the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan and other Asia-Pacific countries, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Australia. The program involves working with key tour operators, tour wholesalers, travel agencies and the media to establish new Montana itineraries for groups and Foreign Independent Travelers (FITs), while assisting Montana businesses in their marketing efforts overseas. The goal of this program is to enhance the economy by increasing the number of overseas visitors and overnight stays, as well as to increase the inclusion of the Montana tourism product in tour operator’s brochures.

The program also works with the Commerce Department’s Trade Office representative in Kumamoto, Japan to promote Montana as a vacation destination to Japanese tour operators and media.

Group Marketing—

The Domestic Group Travel program promotes Montana's group tour and travel opportunities by marketing directly to group tour operators throughout the United States and Canada. Montana is promoted as a tour destination, as well as a viable stopover on tour itineraries. The major goals of this program are to: provide tour operators with the tools to build a successful Montana tour itinerary; generate more awareness of statewide group tour products; and create top of mind awareness of Montana as a group tour destination.

Tourism Development and Education—

The Tourism Development and Education efforts are focused on helping the state's communities and businesses utilize tourism as a tool to improve the local, regional and state economy while protecting or improving the quality of life for Montana's residents. The components of the Tourism Development and Education programs include: statewide tourism infrastructure improvements grants and technical assistance; assisting Montana's communities, private and public sector entities and the Indian Nations of Montana in their tourism efforts; helping create cultural tourism partnerships and products statewide; and providing customer service and tourism education training programs.

Brand Education and Outreach—

The Brand Development program is responsible for implementing and promoting a consistent positive brand image for Montana as a vacation destination. The program works to not only ensure consistency with the brand platform and principles, but also to develop and administer brand outreach and services to encourage cooperation and support of the Montana Office of Tourism brand strategy by our partners and tourism constituents.

The program's long range strategy is to develop partnerships that allow the Montana Office of Tourism and public-private entities to leverage resources, align missions to best be able to connect with receptive audiences, and continue to encourage outreach and development of partnerships with tribal communities, off-the-beaten path areas, niche and arts and culture markets.



III. INDUSTRY SERVICES AND OPERATIONS BUREAU—

This Bureau includes Industry Services and Operations for the Division, and has identified the following strategies:

- 1) Create a software system through the AIM project that allows for capturing easily used baseline data on the number of consumer facing email newsletters that are sent, bounced, opened and forwarded; time elapsed from initial inquiry to packet fulfillment; inquiries received from the various mediums; quantity and types of products delivered (OBJ 7)
- 2) Survey the recipients of Montana Office of Tourism promotional packets to gauge level of satisfaction in the delivery time and information provided (OBJ 7)
- 3) Use project management methodology to create and implement the Dulles Technology online software for use by the Regions/CVB marketing plan applications and approval by the Tourism Advisory Council (OBJ 8)
- 4) Create a high level project plan for all projects occurring within the Montana Office of Tourism that will include project datelines, outcomes and resources required (OBJ 8)
- 5) Implement project management methodologies across all aspects of the Montana Office of Tourism
- 6) Create a scientific approach to managing projects with documentation of results that can be used in decision making for future projects (OBJ 8)

INDUSTRY SERVICES AND OPERATIONS PROGRAMS—

Industry Services—

Industry Services supports nonprofit tourism organizations and private-sector businesses to enhance and strengthen marketing efforts that increase business, as well as provide opportunities for the industry to unite and work together. Industry services provides training and assistance as well as oversees the distribution of the lodging facility use tax funds to the six regional non-profit corporations and the twelve qualified convention and visitors bureaus. It also provides project management assistance to the rest of the division.

Operations—

Operations supports the mission of Montana Promotions by providing front desk services to all programs, direct customer service, financial oversight, and fulfillment of the inquiries received via Montana Promotion Division's marketing efforts with publications, emails and customer interaction via a call center. The front desk also processes direct requests for commercial publication orders, and tracks visitation numbers to popular sites. Our fulfillment process utilizes a contact center and provides mailroom services to distribute our publications expeditiously.
